

53A-17a-159 Utah Science Technology and Research Initiative Centers Program.

- (1)
 - (a) The Utah Science Technology and Research Initiative (USTAR) Centers Program is created to provide a financial incentive for charter schools and school districts to adopt programs that result in a more efficient use of human resources and capital facilities.
 - (b) The potential benefits of the program include:
 - (i) increased compensation for math and science teachers by providing opportunities for an expanded contract year which will enhance school districts' and charter schools' ability to attract and retain talented and highly qualified math and science teachers;
 - (ii) increased capacity of school buildings by using buildings more hours of the day or more days of the year, resulting in reduced capital facilities costs;
 - (iii) decreased class sizes created by expanding the number of instructional opportunities in a year;
 - (iv) opportunities for earlier high school graduation;
 - (v) improved student college preparation;
 - (vi) increased opportunities to offer additional remedial and advanced courses in math and science;
 - (vii) opportunities to coordinate high school and post-secondary math and science education; and
 - (viii) the creation or improvement of science, technology, engineering, and math centers (STEM Centers).
- (2) From money appropriated for the USTAR Centers Program, the State Board of Education shall award grants to charter schools and school districts to pay for costs related to the adoption and implementation of the program.
- (3) The State Board of Education shall:
 - (a) solicit proposals from the State Charter School Board and school districts for the use of grant money to facilitate the adoption and implementation of the program; and
 - (b) award grants on a competitive basis.
- (4) The State Charter School Board shall:
 - (a) solicit proposals from charter schools that may be interested in participating in the USTAR Centers Program;
 - (b) prioritize the charter school proposals and consolidate them into the equivalent of a single school district request; and
 - (c) submit the consolidated request to the State Board of Education.
- (5) In selecting a grant recipient, the State Board of Education shall consider:
 - (a) the degree to which a charter school or school district's proposed adoption and implementation of an extended year for math and science teachers achieves the benefits described in Subsection (1);
 - (b) the unique circumstances of different urban, rural, large, small, growing, and declining charter schools and school districts; and
 - (c) providing pilot programs in as many different school districts and charter schools as possible.
- (6)
 - (a) Except as provided in Subsection (6)(b), a school district or charter school may only use grant money to provide full year teacher contracts, part-time teacher contract extensions, or combinations of both, for math and science teachers.
 - (b) Up to 5% of the grant money may be used to fund math and science field trips, textbooks, and supplies.
- (7) Participation in the USTAR Centers Program shall be:

- (a) voluntary for an individual teacher; and
 - (b) voluntary for a charter school or school district.
- (8) The State Board of Education shall make an annual report during the 2009, 2010, and 2011 interims to the Public Education Appropriations Subcommittee describing the program's impact on students and its effectiveness at achieving the benefits described in Subsection (1).

Enacted by Chapter 397, 2008 General Session